

Empower!

GIVING VICTIMS AND THEIR FAMILIES A VOICE



A Publication of the Metropolitan Police Department's Victim Services Branch

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Message from Tyria Fields



Tyria Fields

Created to improve accessibility and coordination between law enforcement personnel and survivors of crime, the Victim Services Branch provides access to a vast amount of resources. These members offer sup-

port for those seeking information and services from the Metropolitan Police Department. Victim Specialists work in collaboration with detectives to educate victims of crime. On behalf of victims our members advocate for a voice and inclusion in

the criminal justice system. Please contact us for continual victim-centered advocacy and support.

Upcoming Events and Activities

Ongoing

Survivors of Homicide Support Group Meeting

Last Thursday of every Month 7-8 p.m.

This support group is for secondary victims who have lost a loved one to homicide. In the support group, secondary victims are given an opportunity to express themselves on coping mechanisms and their loss. Strategies to help with the grieving process and project suggestions to remember their loved ones are provided.

For more information, call Survivors of Homicide at **202-258-2564** Howard University Campus 530 College Street, NW Washington, DC 20059

August

National Night Out

It's that time again! National Night Out is a crime prevention activity intended to strengthen the partnership between the community and the police. National Night Out was held this year on August 5, 2014. Law enforcement officials host activities such as block parties, cookouts, youth events, safety demonstrations, vigils, and competitive events. For National Night Out events in your district, visit www.mpdc.gov/nno.

September

National Suicide Awareness Month

Individuals suffering a crisis such as victimization or mental illness may find it difficult to cope with everyday life. September is National Suicide Awareness Month. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that nearly 3000 people commit suicide per day. The World Health Organization seeks to educate the public about suicide, decrease stigmatization about the topic, spread information about awareness, and inform everyone that suicide is preventable. If you or a loved one is considering or has thought about suicide, please call the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at **1-800-273-8255**.

October

Domestic Violence Awareness Month

A complex pattern of behavior that can include physical harm, sexual assault, emotional and/or verbal abuse, domestic violence is pervasive and affects all parts of society. Established by the National Coalition against Domestic Violence, Domestic Violence Awareness Month takes place every October. State and national organizations design activities with the intention of bringing awareness to the destruction of domestic violence. For a list of activities in the area, visit www.dccadv.org.

MPD's NOK Meeting

October is also the time MPD's Victim Services Branch holds one of the biannual next of kin meetings. Coordinated by the Family Liaison Specialists Unit, these meetings give family members of unsolved homicides and opportunity to ask questions, find out the status of a case, or provide information to the detective assigned to their loved one's case.

First District Station
101 M Street, NW
Family Liaison Specialists
202-645-6363

November

National Bullying Awareness Month

National Bullying Awareness Month is a time when communities across the country unite against bullying. Events, activities, outreach, and educational initiatives are bolstered in order to raise awareness about bullying and prevention methods. Schools can register to end bullying and individuals can sign an online petition to show their solidarity and commitment to ending violence and bullying at www.pacer.org/bullying/nbpm.

December

Tree of Remembrance

Save the date — December 6 — for this tribute to loved ones lost to homicide.

—Kayce Simmons

Major Case Unit Holds 2014 Next-of-Kin Meeting at Homicide Unit

NEXT OF KIN

The Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) held a Next-of-Kin meeting on Saturday, June 28, 2014 at MPD Headquarters hosted by the Major Case Victims Unit (MCVU) for family members of unsolved homicides. Each family member had the opportunity to meet with the detective investigating their loved one's case as well as a Homicide Official to discuss concerns, obtain answers to questions about their case,

and provide new information that may assist with solving the case. Participants also met with the Victim Services Branch members who explained the services that are offered including advocacy, referral services, emotional support, case management, as well as information on Victim Rights and the Crime Victim Compensation Program. Attendees received the following: a journal, information on the Major Case Unit: Process &

Other Information, The Road Less Traveled, Tips for Survivors of a Traumatic Events (Managing Stress), and counseling resources.

If you have information on any unsolved homicides you may do the following;

- » email MPD at unsolved.murder@dc.gov
- » call (202) 727-9099
- » or text information to the Department's TIP Line at 50411

—Dawn Christie

MPD, DCCADV Team Up to Collect Used Cell Phones for Victims of DV

The Metropolitan Police Department and the DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence (DCCADV) have joined forces in providing gently-used cell phones to victims of domestic violence. DCCADV provides emergency support to victims of domestic violence through citywide relief efforts, including a cell phone drive that provides emergency cell phones

to them. tal resource for those in need of help. Since its inception in 2004, the Coalition's emergency cell phone program has collected over 6,200 phones and distributed more than 2,100 phones with chargers to local survivors of domestic violence.

The DCCADV cleans the donated cell phones and programs them for 911 calls only. The phones are then given to victims of domestic violence. These phones may be a valuable tool to those victims who do not have access to a telephone either a landline or cellular by connecting him/her to emergency services when needed.

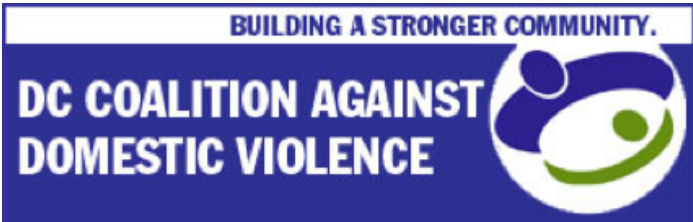
Emergency cell phones are provided to needy families through several distribution points: the two Domestic Violence Intake Center locations (DC Superior Court and Greater Southeast Community Hospital); two confidential domestic violence shelters; Children's National Medical Center; three anti-domestic violence service providers;

and the On-Call Advocacy Program (OCAP) available through the Metropolitan Police Department, with most of the recipients of emergency relief coming from Wards 6, 7, and 8.

Collection sites are also in every district and substation. Individuals may drop off their used and unwanted cell phones (including chargers, batteries, cases, etc.), in the designated boxes. Or contact the Victim Services Branch at MPD Headquarters to schedule an appointment with Beyshinah Woods, Victim Specialist by calling 202-727-6007.

The DCCADV handles all tax deduction requests. Individuals requesting to receive a tax deduction for their contribution may call Jennifer Hooker, Director of Finance & Operations at 202-299-1181.

—Beyshinah Woods



to them.

DCCADV's year round cell phone drive helps make sure that victims of domestic violence always have a way to call for help. Because all newer model cell phones can be used to call 911 regardless if they have an active service plan or not, they can be a vi-

Major Case Victims Unit Provides Support for Unsolved Homicides

Usually, homicide cases are investigated by the detective assigned to the original incident for up to four years. Likewise, supportive services for homicide cases are initially supported by the Family Liaison Specialists Unit. During that time, every lead is examined. Unsolved cases are then transferred to the Homicide Branch-Major Case/Cold Case Unit for continued investigation by detectives. To provide continued support, the Major Case Victim Unit (MCVU) provides support to the detectives and families once they are transferred. Members of MCVU become responsible for providing on-support and education to secondary victims of homicide. Together

both units work to assist families impacted by homicides in the District of Columbia.

Detective Sergeant Andrew Finkelman oversees the Homicide Branch-Major Case/Cold Case Unit. The Unit consists of detectives who bring years of law enforcement experience in various capacities. Together, the detectives make up a unit which systematically investigates unsolved homicides. They work closely with crime and intelligence analysts, the Violent Crime Review Board, the United States Attorney's Office, the MPD Specialist Victims Unit and the public.

Tyria Fields supervises the Major Case Victims Unit. The staff of MCVU brings over 18 years of advocacy, education and emotional support

to communities. Their roles include providing on-going support, case updates and referrals to government and community based resources to secondary victims of homicides and victim of assaults. Victim Specialists are available to help. Further, Victim Specialists in MCVU assist families in accessing benefits from the Crime Victims Compensation Program and provide information on the criminal justice system. MCVU takes pride enhancing communication between you and the detective. Let us know how we can support you.

—La Verne Harley, CA

Understanding Male Victimization: Myths vs. Realities

Resources

- DC Rape Crisis Center Hotline 24/7 at 202-333-7273
- One in 6 www.1in6.org/
- ASKDC www.askdc.org
- Men Can Stop Rape www.mencanstoprape.org
- For Male Survivors of Sexual Assault www.cmhc.utexas.edu

If your friend told you he was sexually abused, would you...

- ...judge him?
- ...believe him?
- ...see him as less of a man?
- ...add to his sense of shame?
- ...question his sexuality?
- ...think he will abuse?
- ...listen?

Most people believe that sexual assault only happens to women, but men can be sexually assaulted, too. Whether you are a man or a woman, sexual assault is a traumatic experience and it can change your life forever.

Just like sexual assault against women, the offenders may use weapons, physical force or the threat of force. They can be blackmailed or

threaten a victim into submitting to the power of authority.

Myth Vs. Reality

Myth: Men can't be sexually assaulted. Reality: Men are sexually assaulted. Any man can be sexually assaulted regardless of size, strength, appearance or sexual orientation. Rape is not about sex or desire, but about power and control.

Believing this myth allows many men to feel safe, not fear and to think that only women are sexually assaulted. Regrettably, these beliefs can be detrimental to male survivors of sexual assault because they are ashamed and feel that they are the only ones. This is exactly why few men actually get help after being

sexually assaulted. They feel ashamed, confused and blame themselves for the crime.

Myth: Only gay men are sexually assaulted. Reality: Sexual orientation is not a factor in sexual assault. Heterosexual, gay, and bisexual men are equally at risk. Sexual assault is about anger and control, not sexual attraction. Rape is not the result of a man's sexual orientation nor can it change his orientation afterwards. (For more information go to: <http://1in6.org/men/myths/>). The fact is being sexually assaulted has nothing to do with sexual orientation. Remember, the survivor is NEVER to blame, even if the attacker was an acquaintance, date or friend.

—Esther Urbano Thomas

Exploring the Stages of Grief

Grief is a natural response to death or loss. The five stages of grief are common reactions people have as they try to make sense of the loss (denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance).

- » Stage 1—Denial includes the feeling of shock, numbness, and disbelief. When the loss first occurs most people have a hard time believing that it is really happening. It's a sense of "I can't believe I'm not going to see him anymore". Part of the denial stage is to tell your story over and over. Eventually people begin to ask "how did this happen?" or "why?".
- » Stage 2—Anger can pres-

ent itself in different ways, anger at your loved ones, God, the world, at yourself. Some will express anger towards anything or anyone and some will suppress the anger keeping it bottled up or turning it inward.

- » Stage 3—Bargaining is a sense of feeling that we want life to be back to the way it used to be. People may feel guilty focusing on the past and will do anything not to feel the pain.
- » Stage 4—Depression is the stage where people truly begin to realize the loss. Common signs of depression are difficulty sleeping, poor appetite, anxiety, loneliness, and lack of energy.

- » Stage 5—Acceptance usually occurs once an individual is ready to come to terms with all the emotions and feelings. At this stage the healing can begin. Not everyone will experience every stage of grief and some will go through the stages in different order.

MPD's Victim Services Branch provides information and referrals to help families cope with physical and emotional trauma. To find information and supportive services visit <http://mpdc.dc.gov/victim-assistance>.

—Marlene Castro

When It Comes to Victim Advocacy, Start by Believing

Despite their prevalence, crimes of sexual and domestic violence are rarely reported to law enforcement. The existence of widespread misconceptions about victims, perpetrators, and the nature of the crimes (i.e., rape myths) may contribute to this reality. Rape myths include misperceptions about who is "rapeable" and how a victim of a "real" rape behaves before, during, and after an

assault. These myths create a conflict between how many people assume victims should behave and the way in which victims actually behave. (NCVLI, 2014).

Despite these myths and misconceptions, the Victim Specialists at the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) are here for each victim. We don't judge or have misperceptions of those impacted by crime. The MPD *starts by believing*.

In doing so, staff assists with advocacy, referrals, the Crime Victim Compensation Program, victim's rights, and supportive resources. We are also a liaison between the victim and the detective. The Metropolitan Police Department's Victim Specialists will strive for the overall satisfaction of putting survivors first and empowering victims to participate in the criminal proceedings of their case.

—Tramaine Newsome

MPD Celebrates 31st National Night Out with Events Across the City

Resources

If you want to get involved in future NNO activities in your community, please contact your local police district, or visit www.mpdcc.gov/nno.

On Tuesday, August 5, 2014, scores of DC residents, community leaders, law enforcement, and local businesses joined with their neighbors to celebrate the 31st National Night Out. From community cookouts to open houses –

block parties, candlelight vigils and athletic events – DC celebrated "America's Night Out Against Crime." In addition to the numerous activities at the kick-off event, communities across DC – in all seven police districts – scheduled NNO events during the late after-

noon and evening hours.

NNO 2014 was a great success thanks to citizens, law enforcement agencies, civic groups, businesses, neighborhood organizations and local officials from communities representing all 50 states.

—Helen Hall

Mothers Supporting Mothers: Survivors of Homicide Celebrates 20 Years

This year Survivors of Homicide, Inc. celebrated its 20th Annual Mother's Day Brunch. Each year on this special holiday, mothers of homicide victims come together to support, comfort and share memories of their children of all ages whose lives were taken too early. Twenty years ago Mrs. **Julia Dunkins** (seated left) started this tradition to remind mothers that the death of a loved one is the end of a life, but not the end of a relationship as a mother.

For additional information on the Mother's Day Branch contact Mrs. Julia Dunkins at **202-258-2564**.

Seen in the photo are, from left to right (*Seated*): **Julia Dunkins** and **Vivian Flowers**; (*Standing from left to right*): **Susan Crawford**, **Leira Ford**, **Logan Ford**, **Valrease Moten** and **Shanda Smith**.

—Carla Okonkwo



How May We Assist You?

Victim Services Branch

Tyria Fields Manager 724-4339 tyria.fields@dc.gov

The Family Liaison Specialists Unit (FLSU) provides support services to homicide victims and survivors throughout the investigative process.

Family Liaison Specialists Unit

Carla Okonkwo Supervisor 645-9629 carla.okonkwo@dc.gov
Marlene Castro Family Liaison Specialist 645-9631 marlene.castro@dc.gov
Megan Riley Family Liaison Specialist 645-5537 megan.riley@dc.gov

The Victim Specialists Unit (VSU) provides support, information, and referrals to victims and survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Victim Specialists Unit

Helen Hall Victim Specialist 727-6007 helen.hall@dc.gov
Kayce Simmons Victim Specialist 724-2215 kayce.simmons@dc.gov
Esther U. Thomas Victim Specialist 727-6006 estheru.thomas@dc.gov
Tramaine Newsome Victim Specialist 724-2215 tramaine.newsome@dc.gov
Beyshinah Woods Victim Specialist 727-6007 beyshinah.woods@dc.gov

The Major Case Victims Unit (MCVU) provides supportive services to secondary victims of unsolved homicides. Additionally, this unit offers victim services and assistance to victims of violent assaults in the District of Columbia.

Major Case Victims Unit

Dawn M. Christie Victim Specialist 727-7139 dawnm.christie@dc.gov
Laverne Harley Victim Specialist 727-5391 laverne.harley@dc.gov

Please Note: All numbers are area code (202).

Letters & Kudos

Share your story

Send a letter detailing your experiences — positive or negative — to victim.services@dc.gov or send via US Mail to:

Family Liaison Specialists Unit
101 M Street SW, WDC 20024

Thank you, Megan so much for reaching out, and I hope that all is well for you. I think of you and the compassion that you have shown since this nightmare began. I kept waiting for things to return to normal, until I finally woke up one day and realized that this is my new normal, and by God's good grace and mercy, I am slowly beginning to re-establish myself.

May God continue to bless you and your coworkers, and this comes on behalf of my entire family! We really appreciate all that you have done, and I hope that one day I get a chance to fully express my gratitude to you!!

Sincerely,
—J.H.

Grief and Loss Course at Trinity Washington

Marlene and Megan did a fantastic job! I got feedback from my class that it was very informative and thought provoking for them.

Thanks again for all your help!
—K.S.

This is a little late in coming, but I felt that you deserve a thank you for making me aware of the services available to me in getting my son, Billy Andre Harris laid to rest, and following through to the end. It was indeed a blessing, and a tremendous help in lightening the burden of this terrible tragedy. It is still a day-to-day process, but we are getting through by leaning on God and each other.

*Thank you sincerely
for sharing our sorrow.*

*Your kindness is
deeply appreciated and
will always be remembered.
Shirley B. Jenkins
and family*



Metropolitan Police Department
Victim Services Branch/Family Liaison Specialists Unit
101 M Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024